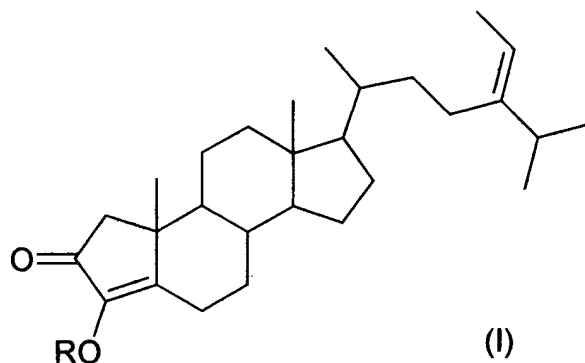


In the Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended) ~~Novel steroids~~ A steroid possessing of the general formula I:



wherein R is selected from the group consisting of a hydrogen, a lower alkyl radical ~~having from~~ of 1 to 7 carbon atoms, a lower cycloalkyl radical ~~having from~~ of 3 to 7 carbon atoms, an aryl radical ~~having from~~ of 5 to 10 carbon atoms, an aryl alkyl radical wherein the alkyl radical has ~~from~~ 1 to 6 carbon atoms, ~~or an acyl moiety derived from~~ of an aliphatic carboxylic acid.

Claim 2 (currently amended) The tautomeric forms of ~~the novel steroids~~ a steroid ~~according to~~ of Claim 1.

Claim 3 (currently amended) A metallic complexes complex of the compounds compound of claims claim 1 wherein R is a hydrogen.

Claim 4 (currently amended) ~~Blocking means for the steroids~~ A steroid of ~~general formula I according to~~ claim 1, wherein the ketonic function is blocked in the form of a member selected from the group consisting of ketal, thioketal, a hemithioketal, an oxime or an optically-active or a racemic (dicarboxyalkylene)ketal

Claim 5 (currently amended) A compound ~~according to~~ any of the preceding of ~~claims~~ claim 1, that is 2-oxo 3-hydroxy 25-ethylidene Δ -nor-cholest-3-ene.

Claim 6 (currently amended) A compound ~~according of~~ claim 1, ~~that~~ which is 2-oxo 3-acetoxy 25-ethylidene Δ -nor-cholest-3-ene.

Claim 7 (currently amended) A compound ~~according of~~ claim 1, ~~that~~ which is 2-oxo 3-methoxy 25-ethylidene Δ -nor-cholest-3-ene.

Cancel **Claims 8 to 14** and add the following claims.

Claim 15 (new) A process for the preparation of a compound of claim 1 wherein R is other than hydrogen or acyl comprising reacting a compound of formula I wherein R is hydrogen in an inert

solvent with a diazoalkane selected from the group consisting of halide, sulfate and a tosylate of alkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl or aralkyl.

Claim 16 (new) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula I of claim I wherein R is acyl of an aliphatic carboxylic acid comprising reacting a compound of claim 1 wherein R is hydrogen with an acylating agent of an aliphatic carboxylic acid in a polar aprotic solvent in the presence of an acylating catalyst.

Claim 17 (new) A method of increasing the synthesis of collagen in warm-blooded animals comprising administering to a warm-blooded animal in need thereof a composition containing an effective amount of a compound of claim 1.

Claim 18 (new) The method of claim 17 wherein the composition is applied to the skin of the warm-blooded animal.

Claim 19 (new) The method of claim 17 wherein the composition also contains an estrogenic compound.

Claim 20 (new) The method of claim 19 wherein the estrogenic compound is selected from the group consisting of estradiol and an ether of estradiol.